

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 306839
ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/EGY:C A KENNEDY:MM
APPROVED BY NEA/EGY:D O NEWBERRY
DOD/AOCE:COL V RATHBURN
DOD/ISA:CAPT C WILSON

-----008222 240740Z /15

R 240118Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT

SUBJECT: CORPS OF ENGINEERS - SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY

REF: A. STATE 291917, B. CAIRO 19815, C. STATE 283802

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER SENT DECEMBER 21 FROM MRS.
BENSON TO DAVID MC GIFFERT, DOD/ISA:

QUOTE: DEAR DAVE: THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN REQUESTED
BY THE EGYPTIAN SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY (SCA) TO PROVIDE THE
SERVICES OF AN ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' DREDGE FOR A PERIOD
OF UP TO ONE YEAR. THE DREDGE WOULD BE USED BY THE SCA IN
THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE CANAL. THE CORPS OF ENGINEERS
HAS INFORMED US THAT A DREDGE COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR
THIS PURPOSE, CONTINGENT ON THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER THAN
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CORPS FUNDS AND ASSURANCES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE THAT
SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD SERVE OUR FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS IN
THE AREA.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SCA PREVIOUSLY HAS INDICATED TO OUR AM-
BASSADOR IN CAIRO THAT SCA CAN PAY FOR THE USE OF A DREDGE,
THE ANNUAL COST OF WHICH IS ESTIMATED AT \$10.1 MILLION.

CERTAINLY AT THIS JUNCTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, THE PRESIDENT

IS GOING TO EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES TO GIVE SUPPORT TO
PRESIDENT SADAT FOR HIS COURAGEOUS INITIATIVES IN PURSUIT
OF PEACE. WE CERTAINLY FEEL THAT IT WOULD SERVE OUR
FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES TO PROVIDE EGYPT WITH ASSISTANCE
WHICH WILL HELP IT IMPROVE ONE OF ITS MOST VITAL RESOURCES,
THE SUEZ CANAL.

THE ACTUAL TERMS AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE OPERA-
TION OF THE DREDGE IN EGYPT WILL BE AGREED UPON IN NEGO-
TIATIONS BETWEEN EMBASSY CAIRO AND THE SCA.

SINCERELY, LUCY WILSON BENSON, UNDER SECRETARY FOR SECURITY
ASSISTANCE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. END QUOTE.

2. CORPS OF ENGINEERS BELIEVES ABOVE LETTER WILL SATISFY
THEIR DESIRE FOR "NATIONAL INTEREST DETERMINATION".
ACCORDINGLY YOU ARE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS WITH SCA CHAIR-
MAN MASHOUR AVAILABILITY OF DREDGE ON BASIS OF HIS EARLIER
EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO FUND COST FROM HIS OWN RESOURCES.

3. THE COE IS INFORMING APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS
OF THIS INITIATIVE TO SEND A DREDGE OUT OF COUNTRY. COE
ANTICIPATES NO ADVERSE REACTION. VANCE
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